THE THEOLOGY OF WORK

AN EXPLORATION

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M.D. CHENU

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The Theology of Work

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An Exploration

M. D. CHENU, O.P.

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Towards a Theology of Work

"WE SHALL always have workers and masters." This conservative-minded social cliché betrays a complete misconception of the rôle of work in human evolution. It was a sentiment which was fairly current in Christian thinking round about 1910, and was even enounced, somewhat ingenuously perhaps, by a highly-placed cleric of the period. The practice of zealous fraternal charity, as adovcated by contemporary ecclesiastics and teachers, did little to render the platitude more acceptable or diminish its harmfulness. On the contrary, such charity tended to produce a glow of false self-righteousness in the giver which only went to camouflage its deleterious effects.

The repudiation of the class struggle which resulted, immediately revealed the ambiguity of such an attitude. On the one hand, brotherly love, as taught by the Gospel, forbids hatred, as the clash of two egotisms and the negation of human liberty. On

the other hand, observation of facts, and the demands of a justice based on Gospel love, impose a true equilibrium between labour and capital, in contrast to the hypocrisy of the philanthropist and the humanitarianism of the liberal. This antagonism will not be resolved by the exercise of moral virtues to restrain envy on the one side and greed for profit on the other. A complete change in the economic structure is necessary, for this is not a question of the quarrel between rich and poor, but of the whole nature and constitution of our social and economic organisation.

The pious moralism which, in reality, devitalises the Gospel precepts and infringes the Christian condemnation of riches, still colours the thinking of many Christians; but at any rate it no longer has the sanction unwittingly provided by a short-sighted theology. Today we are far from having achieved a "theology of work," to use a recently-coined phrase; but thoughtful Christians are endeavouring to look beyond abstract morality to the study of work as a subject in its own right, of its economic functions and its historic rôle. It is no longer necessary to adorn the idea of work with a veneer of virtues which, however praiseworthy in themselves, are alien and irrelevant. In the long run, this can only confirm their inapplicability—a mistake from a theological point of view. We must understand the nature of work and its human and material origins, in order to appreciate its internal laws and its spiritual needs from a Christian standpoint. If the "civilisation of work" demands its own ethic, which up to the present no one has yet evolved, Christians can only collaborate in this evolution by considering and understanding,

in the first place, what work means for the people of the twentieth century.

It is strange, and indeed depressing, to realise that Christianity, since Vittoria and Suarrez in the sixteenth century—if not since the classical Middle Ages in Western theology—possessed a theology of war. We also have a theology of commerce, even if only in the persistent condemnation (it can hardly be called an effective condemnation) of usury, which, we are told, should have stifled capitalism at birth. As well as these we have a theology of history, or rather several theologies, some of doubtful validity, such as the providentialist theology of Bossuet—but no theology of work. (By theology I do not mean an intellectual esoteric science, but an organic and rational study in the light of faith of the human values which enter, directly or indirectly, into a system of salvation.) The expression itself may be said to be quite recent; for although the phrase "morality of work" has been current since the nineteenth century, and "mystique of work" for some twenty years, the term "theology of work" appeared for the first time only five or six years ago. This is a significant point. It confirms what we have already observed, that up to the present, Christian teachers did not consider these human realities except as amorphous matter, capable of being explained only in a moral sense and sanctified under the heading of "duties of one's state of life." They commented, naturally, on the passages in Genesis dealing with the punitive aspect of work; but they gave no direct attention to its objective content. They made no attempt to discern its economic and human potentialities, or to consider its

possibile relationship with the divine ordering of the world.

However this absence of a theology should not trouble us overmuch, when we consider that we also lack a psychology, a sociology and a philosophy of work. Today all these are in full and simultaneous development, including the theological aspect. If they have been slow in beginning, the reason is the same in every case. Before psychology, sociology, philosophy or religion can receive the necessary impetus to advance beyond the stage of empiricism, there must be an effective awakening of consciousness. The history of nineteenth century thought records, after the technical, economical and social upheavals of the age, the first stir of this awakening which begets not only revolutions, but philosophies. Today this awareness has come of age, competent if not to solve our problems at any rate to define them. It proceeds from methodical analysis to higher theory and so, in the sense referred to above, to theology.

It is indeed true that man has always laboured and toiled in the sweat of his brow. But just as he gave no thought to analysing or defining the laws of love —although he had always experienced its emotions— until an awakening of consciousness roused his retrospective observation, so he only began to evolve a science of work when a collective awakening of consciousness enabled him and his fellow-men to observe its laws, its purposes and its historical mission. This awakening, then, was brought about during the last century when the radical transformation in the character of work confronted man, physically and spiritually, with a new reality, the conditions and

structure of which profoundly affect not alone his standard of living but his whole way of life. This was a dual and unique transformation which revolutionised the relations between man and nature. The change-over from craft tool to machine not only opened up a new chapter in economic history but inaugurated a new era for mankind. The first human consequence of mechanical efficiency in this age was, unfortunately, the ill-omened creation of a proletariat. The proletariat has thus been the setting for this awakening, not only of a revolutionary but almost of a scientific awareness.

The circumstances of the birth of the proletariat are well known. Since we are engaged at the moment in studying the repercussions on Christian theology, we may note here a small but significant indication even in the terms used by theologians. Whereas Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), speaks of "the condition of workers (opifices)," which forms the title of the document itself, Pius XI, forty years later, gives as a subject-heading in his Encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*: "On the liberation of the proletariat (proletarii)." As with psychology or sociology, it was on the basis of the existence of the proletariat as a social consequence of the machine age that Christian thinkers began to evolve a theology of work. "Contrary to the divine purpose, work in these conditions tends to become degrading; inanimate matter is turned out of the factory ennobled, while the man who works on it becomes degraded." This apostolic admonition of Pius XI, re-echoing the warnings of sociologists and the revolt of the revolutionaries, contains the germ of that constructive

thought which finally transcends empiricism, even the empiricism of charity to the poor.

It is thus not merely a question of broadening the scope of classic morality, or drawing from "eternal verities" marginal applications to suit the situation of the moment. We must re-value this new human terrain of work, which has become, in the machine age, a reality lacking anything in common with its previous character over thousands of years, its function and purposes as much changed as its structure. The tragic gulf between mechanisation and humanity cannot be bridged by the usual conventional phrases on the dignity of manual labour having been restored by Christianity, on the value of work as an educative discipline, or even, at the doctrinal level, on its ascetic function in a world where suffering, sin and liberation are linked together. The traditional images of potter, blacksmith and peasant with which the Bible furnished the old theologians, are not only inadequate but often encouraged a resentment against the machine and led to debatable praise of craft-working, small-scale proprietorship, the patriarchal family and the peasantry, which is both bad theology and vain romanticism. The protest of man against the idea of labour as a commodity which generates the proletariat, a protest which the Christian endorses from his own standpoint, must be reflected in a reconsideration in the domain of theology and morals. The postulates and the data for a "civilisation of work" are also, in the light of the Gospel, the postulates and the data for a "theology of work."

1. The change-over from craft tool to machine causes, over and beyond an increase in quantity, a

qualitative transformation of work. Thus it ends by modifying the way of life not only of individuals but of humanity as a whole. We must therefore work out not only the extension of moral laws governing human occupations, but also define the new significance of such work in this unforeseen encounter of man and nature. For if we are to have any hope of overcoming the disasters caused by the present tyranny of the machine, or more accurately of passing from an external and necessarily forced adaptation to a real assimilation, it will be by the achievement of a rational and moral conquest of nature.

This is, in fact, the earthly destiny of man and its essential characteristic. " Let us put him in command of the fishes in the sea, and all that flies through the air, and the cattle, and the whole earth, and all the creeping things that move on earth. So God made man in his own image, made him in the image of God." (*Genesis* 1: 26-27). Man is *homo sapiens*, but he can only be so, in his collective capacity at all events, by becoming *homo artifex*, which is his first definition. Man, said Mounier paradoxically, is naturally artificial.

> If man is made to become a god, naturally or supernaturally, we cannot accept that wisdom for him should consist in a prudent and monotonous conformity to a " Nature " defined once and for all . . . Man so placed is essentially *artifex*, creator of forms, maker of artifacts . . . The disciples of nature were right to remind us that the human condition is not capable of extension in every direction, and that time is necessary for man to assimilate his own transformations. But the systematic discredit which they cast on everything

artificial springs from a radically false view of the nature of man. We might say, with hardly any distortion of words, that "the nature of man is artifice."[1]

Man fulfils himself by dominating, through his discoveries, reason, strength and virtue, that Nature which is his kingdom, and out of which he creates a new world, a human world. God has appointed him lord of creation.

Man has now arrived at an important stage in this enterprise and it should also be a major stage in his self-fulfilment.[2] The worst setbacks and the most blameworthy misdeeds cannot halt this destiny. Each victory over space and time—the two dimensions of work—reveals, even though obscured by foolish pride, its greatness and truth.

This "humanism" of work does not dismay the theologian, and the rationalisation which it involves for this technical conquest of the universe does not lessen the sense of mystery which we sometimes seem to reserve only for those realities which we have not ourselves created and to which we submit with fear. The terrible gods of the religion of Lucretius are false gods. We yield too easily to the opposition between rational and sacred, and so revert to the beliefs of our childhood. Some say that work is a profane and impious attempt to exploit nature. No; reason, the

[1] E. Mounier: "Pour un temps d'apocalypse," Unesco lecture, Paris 1947, reproduced in *La petite peur du XXe siècle*, p. 29.

[2] Mournier continues: "From this point of view, we can say that in the dawn of modern times European man has now come to the term of a kind of uterine existence in the womb of a universe enfolding him like the shell of an egg under the guardianship of a Church which watched over his first steps" (loc. cit., p. 30).

constructive reason of the technician, as well as the reason which governs our thought and contemplation, exists in ourselves. It is a unique force in the duality of its functions, the highest and most certain mark of God—more than a mark, a reflection. Its autonomy, in epistemological method, in interior liberty as in practical action, is the main point of this image, even where it runs the greatest risk of arrogantly repudiating its divine parentage. A glorious risk, which reason must meet and conquer in order to be itself. "Rationalisation," the rationalisation of time, which is the first characteristic of machine civilisation, is only the technical condition of the discovery and conquest of the "reasons" which are in things and in the universe, in which we recognise our own reason, the measure of all things, by the participation of God. The world is full of ideas, said the Ancients. Work which gives ideas birth, is a major act of adult men and should not be considered, either by right- or left-wing thinkers, as opposed to contemplation. The Christian man of wisdom—contrary to the aristocratic Greek sage or the Cartesian philosopher—finds unity in the combination of these two functions. The civilisation of work will provide plenty of matter for the methods and mysteries of theology.

Long before the technocrats of our time, Descartes and Newton deprived the world of its divinities by making it inanimate. But theirs was an embryonic world. Without realising it (and I certainly do not forgive their ignorance), the technocrats lead us to Nature, that Nature which, as far back as the thirteenth century when techniques were first discovered in Europe, was called by the rationalist and anti-clerical

Jean de Meung the " vicar of God." When we denounce the machine, we must, avoiding naïve optimism, define its limits and warn against its dangers. We must also however be on our guard against biassed obscurantism. We must discover in the resources of nature the elements of the human condition. By transforming work the machine has inaugurated a new age of man in the universe.

2. Having dealt with the postulates and data for a theology of work, we must now consider its ends. They too are renewed by its changed techniques, since motives, which until recently were mainly subconscious, are implicit in its new structure, and show themselves today precisely by this awakening consciousness which has suddenly impelled them beyond their original goals. The purpose of work today is not only to enable us to earn our living. It also creates a kind of social energy, at the immediate service of humanity as a whole. The worker, in his poverty, with all his exacting demands, has a confused realisation of this admirable efficacy, as has the managing director, in his loyalty to an impersonal organisation. Production today cannot and should not be for the sole and primary motive of providing daily bread on the one side and a grossly disproportionate capitalist profit on the other. Production should extend beyond this to the human ends of individual and collective welfare in an economic system of services and needs. The " dogmas " of liberal industrialism have become bankrupt. Work is indeed a means of liberation, but in quite a different meaning.

Here the theologians have a wonderful field. For too long they have confined themselves merely to

advocating moderation in profits. The sternest criticism of capitalism never went beyond these limits. Now theology can advance further than this purely moral aspect, and base itself, in a human and Christian economy, on the physical density of work as part of the fabric of the world, and, religiously speaking, of divine government. We have no hesitation in expecting the revelation of a new moral value from this new process of thought.

3. This leads us on, beyond the individual, to the evolution of society. Work is a humanising factor by becoming the pivot of a "socialisation" thanks to which humanity marks a definite stage in its collective advance.

After rationalisation, the second evil for which the machine is blamed is concentration—material, economic, financial, demographic—with all its harmful concomitants. Nothing is to be gained by further condemnation here. We must however once again seek to discover the causes and not wrongly attribute responsibility. Modern methods of production, it is true, necessitate an unprecedented physical and psychological concentration of means and forms, not only in large complexes but even in smaller organisations, which one might expect to be less demanding. Yet this overwhelming pressure generates of itself a collective consciousness which is the expression of a highly valuable communal solidarity.

Basic unit and mass assembly alike produce a phenomenon of interiorisation which, in spite of deep diversities and growing risks, slowly and painfully develops a feeling of taking part in a common effort—if it can be called common!—and of belonging to a

team working for the same purpose towards the common welfare. Through this participation, even though it be compulsory, emerges a freedom born of love for a common good in which each feels himself an active member. This is the law of "community" as analysed by the sociologists. We can compare it, to some extent, with what spiritual writers of all ages, from St Paul to St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, observed in their subjective experience of the law by which obedience brings freedom through submission itself. Objective presentation of individuals—instead of anonymous confrontation—constitutes a spiritual presence, a feeling of brotherhood, thus creating a social atmosphere previously unrealised.

Here cold reality gives the lie to this idyllic dream. There is no worse war than that between the "communities" which, in the world of work, the classes have become. But even here we must not leave out of consideration the *nature* of things because of the evil in man. The Christian, at all events, who knows that man was driven from an earthly paradise by sin, should not be surprised. He only concludes that work, like everything else, including love, must be redeemed. This is the Christian economy of redemption. Work, according to Genesis, is the first to be affected. The *nature* of things remains, however, and with it, this social principle which releases innate spiritual forces in situations where men are joined together in common undertakings by a solidarity which long retained its primitive aggressiveness. By re-integrating man in his work, socialisation becomes a liberating force. The violent and bitter awakening of consciousness among the proletariat, has been the first effect

of this law. We must not lose hope that one day, in peace and fraternity, it will come to fruition. This will necessitate, of course, the creation of these "communities" which alone can be the spiritual bond of such an interiorisation, and consequently of this enhancement of personality and freedom. It will demand the most far-reaching structural reforms. At least we know that a depersonalising collectivism is only the human perversion, in a disastrous interlude, of an operation which, when concluded, will manifest, on a plane which today is privileged, the social nature of man. Once again work reveals the significance of this nature. On this basis an authentic theology can establish the "spirituality" of work.

4. Finally, since this social progress of man, spiritual as well as economic, determines the laws of his history, we see work becoming, in man's consciousness, one of the factors of this history, through the interaction of free will and the determinism of matter. Time is effectively the field and measure of its transformations, its efficacy, its purposes. Just as in the evolution of the cosmos man is physically perfected, so in the evolution of society, man is completed socially. Here work plays a primordial rôle. The impassible gulf between matter and spirit does not destroy this historical unity, in which the Creator has made man his agent. Man is precisely the being who, indissolubly and consubstantially matter and spirit, is fitted thereby to carry into history the mystery of the spirit. Angels have no history. An old mediaeval theologian said that God, desiring to extend his love to all, in a creative expansion, could only do so through and in an original being who,

united to matter, would carry love's destiny even into matter.[8] This divine expansion is not only realised in carnal love, it is present wherever a community expresses itself on a basis of material work. Solidarity of work is a privileged field at a time when this solidarity effectively shapes humanity and thereby the motive force of history, since material time is the vehicle of this continuous creation. The sacred history of the Incarnation everywhere transcends this earthly history. It does not eliminate it. On the contrary, it will consummate, in a new heaven and a new earth, all temporary work as well as all unsatisfied love.

Here theology takes up one of its favourite theses. We have spoken on several occasions of "divine government." This was a current phrase—to be sternly purged of its anthropomorphism—used by the Christian teachers in the Middle Ages. Their theological works include a discussion of man's place in the universe. They observe the substantial connections of his human nature with material nature, with a view to revealing his rôle as *artifex*, to calculating the significance of matter not only in his body but in the fabric of the universe with which he is entrusted, and whose mechanisms he discovers in these "mutations" and "motions" which from the celestial bodies reverberate from circle to circle even into the secrets of the mind and freedom of man. These great mediaeval religious teachers go so far as to study the biological laws of nutrition and generation, since matter, as they say, "is necessary to the truth of

[8] The reference is to the author of *Ars catholicae fidei*, at the end of the twelfth century, probably Alain de Lille. *Patr. lat.* 210, col. 607-608.

human nature." It is on this subject, together with the treatise on divine government, that the first part of the *Summa* of St Thomas (*Utrum aliquid de alimento convertatur in veritatem humanae naturae*) concludes. Why have modern theologians, acquiescing in the Lutheran distinction between nature and grace, almost entirely given up this view of the world as a *natural* frame and spiritual sphere of action for man in his work? The historical perspective which we must add to it today, far from diminishing its value, increases it, just as a third dimension transfigures, without deforming, the surface of space.

Today the contemporary situation urges Christians to re-discover, in this new dimension, the forgotten vision of their forefathers, which was in fact the biblical view of nature. What is the contemporary situation—the situation which we analysed at the beginning of this study? The revolution in the character of work, enforced by the pressure of new discoveries and techniques, has released an awakening consciousness, doubtless painful, but basically founded on the inherent truths of man and of matter. The proletariat was the battleground of this awakening of consciousness. As it happened, the change-over from craft tool to machine, in transforming the nature of work, has justified this evolution. By revealing four factors—rationalisation, profit economy, concentration and the march of history—together with the new laws governing work, it has shown us the area of their temporary defeat. These factors have created a proletariat whose revolutionary awareness conceals (and might betray) a scientific realisation of the functions of work in the twentieth century. It is in this

consciousness that the theology of work, like its psychology, sociology or metaphysics, can be evolved.

It is no accident, nor is it due only to the cumulation of individual defections, that the working classes provide the nucleus of positive atheism, which is so different from the middle-class atheism of free-thinkers and philosophers. This is a much deeper and more significant atheism.[4] The reason is that man, as he grew estranged in his work, lost God in losing himself. Work no longer had any human significance and so could not have a religious one. To restore its integrity instead of invoking external moral remedies (and political remedies which are the most dubious) is, theologically speaking, to re-establish work in its cosmic and human functions, and in the design of God the Creator. It is, of course, wrong to deify work; but those who fall into this idolatry, thereby both destroying their souls and denying God, are only trying to satisfy their need to worship. This desire finds mistaken outlets because theologians failed to consider work as a subject worthy of attention in the sphere of human destiny.

A re-awakened theology will soon find inspiration and subjects for study, such as the following:

Man and the Universe. Work is at their meeting-point, and also at the conjunction of spirit and matter. Man is master of the universe: the divine purpose, the vocation of man, is revealed in Genesis. Let us see this not as an initial and pre-historic episode, in which God is purely transcendent and static, and Nature is prefabricated and unchanging, but in the cosmic unfolding of the divine plan. Let us see man

[4] Cf. J. Maritain: *La signification de l'athéisme contemporain*, Paris, 1949

as collaborator in creation and participant in his evolution by his discovering, exploiting and spiritualising Nature. This dominion over nature (work) is a divine participation, even with its possible dangers. *Homo faber* is rightfully placed in Christian, if not in "classic" humanism. The machine is the instrument of this creative enterprise.

The Nature of Man. Man is a composite of spirit and matter, body and soul are not merely in juxtaposition, nor united by an extraneous force. They are consubstantial, one through and in the other. The manifestation of the immortal soul does not lessen the unity of the *convivere.* So, too, we have a consubstantiality of (spiritual) free-will and (material, technical and economic) determinism. Work is a "human" creation by the conjunction of developing techniques and an awareness of free-will. Productive reason, in spite of differences in methods and functions, is none other, fundamentally, than contemplative reason.

The whole economy of salvation. The cosmos enters into this economy through man as a transforming force. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. Eschatological destiny will be fulfilled, in spite of the severance of death, and does not nullify man's terrestrial destiny. This, however, is enough to restrain any erroneous or naïve optimism.

And finally, the *Incarnation.* God is made man; all that is human is material for grace. If work takes on human consistency, then (but only then), it becomes part of, enters into the economy of grace. This entry is twofold, first as the work of man, and secondly as the origin of a community which is

itself a matter for grace. The continuing incarnation; the Mystical Body of Christ; such will be the future classic theme of a spirituality in which the world of work will find its level and its place in Christianity, and not by the acquisition of merits alone.

This spirituality is not a new phenomenon. We find it in Genesis, in St Thomas, in St Paul, in the first dogmas. But it speaks with a new voice, and with a fresh human approach. For too long, Christians were not conscious of these latent powers. Their spirituality —like their apostolate—retreated into the "inner life." St Augustine, a leading example of this inner life in the West, was nevertheless deeply aware of the measure of the universe and of man, seen in space and time. In any case, the Christian heritage includes a cosmic spirituality, of which work is one of the bases. The "civilisation of work," as the twentieth century has already been called, the technical era, in his service, are fitting subjects for the grace of Christ. Today we have reached a point when the lowly and humble, by virtue of their status as workers, are clearly seen to have access to the kingdom of God.

Theology faces new concepts

We have seen how the change-over from craft tool to machine caused a revolution. This revolution, gathered force with each successive discovery in science and technique, from the steam engine to the splitting of the atom. It was based on the autonomy of motive power and had a more far-reaching effect on men's lives than any of the merely political revolutions. It permeated the very content and purpose of men's daily work. While man himself did not, of

course, change his nature, his condition was changed. *Homo artifex* was affected as an individual and in his collective behaviour by this very change in the nature of work itself, a change which was extraneous to the metaphysical essence of man, but went so deep that our perception has not kept pace with its effects and we tend to under-estimate rather than over-estimate them. In a way that would formerly have been unthinkable, man now no longer lives a "natural" life, but a life which is directed and rationalised in a régime which he himself created and invented. And this work only dehumanises in the same way as it could humanise if carried out according to its own laws. How can any theologian, let alone the "moralist," not be affected by this?

Let us pass over the psychological changes, which have frequently been analysed—determinism, repetition, working to time, standardisation, fatigue, etc. —to define this radical transformation. In this encounter between man and nature work is not primarily a discipline, a perfecting of man in his work. It is first of all the making of a product. Now it is precisely by creating a product, by accommodating himself to it, by accepting the laws which govern its manufacture, that the worker achieves his completion as man. This "objectivity" which we might momentarily call dehumanising or materialist may surprise us, and does indeed disconcert a certain school of spiritual thinkers. In fact it is because—thanks to mechanisation —industrial work has demonstrated the full force of this fundamental law that it has aroused apprehension and misgivings among religious people, as well as less significant protests from the literary and philosophic

aristocracy. We have here, however, as has been correctly pointed out,[5] a perfect application to modern conditions of the theological studies carried out by the thirteenth century scholars. The worker labours for the work's sake and not for his own. This is a law of metaphysical disinterestedness governing work in action. In the continual interaction of the perfecting of the work and the perfecting of the worker, the former dominates the latter. The worker is subject to his work. The necessities of production enforce in him a degree of selflessness and objectivity which is measured not by the intention of the morality of the worker, but in his product. If in judging an actual undertaking, a piece of work or construction, we take into premature consideration the subjective purpose of the worker—his creed or his political views, his intentions or his claims—we are breaking this law, and consequently perverting an economy by a kind of irrelevance. Any theological, spiritual, or ideological theory which wholly or partly deprives work, objects, or the world of their content and their intrinsic laws, is fallacious from the beginning, since it is not based on the inherent substance of work and matter. Certain moralists who are prone to accord more importance to meritorious intentions than to the nature of things, have unwittingly succumbed to this fallacy. Such ignorance of reality, including social realities, is unforgivable today, when the whole character of work, through its technical and human evolution, stands revealed. We have doubtless had

[5] This analysis is taken, sometimes practically word for word, from the report by J. Lacroix to the "Journées Universitaires" in Lyons, in 1952, on *La notion de travail*. Also published in *La Vie intellectuelle*, June 1952, pp. 4-31.

a moral philosophy of work. For some years past we have even had a mystique of work; but we have never had a theology.

Is not this a materialism which a Christian must find unacceptable? The time has now come for us to break away from certain conceptions of man and of the union of matter and spirit in man. Without going into the fundamentals of the problem, for which this is not the place, let us merely say that we must now come to a conclusion, in the latitude accorded to theologians and philosophers within Christian doctrine, as to the exact nature of man, his body and soul, matter and spirit. From the standpoint of the disciple of St Augustine, of Descartes or of a Platonic idealist (favouring in greater or lesser degree a certain duality of the composite man whose soul is uneasily lodged in a cumbersome body), this autonomy of the worker in the perfecting of his work, *perfectio operis*, is unacceptable. It is an alienation of man in his product. The theologian who, however, believes on the contrary with St Thomas Aquinas in the substantial union of body and soul, in the ontological and psychological unity of man in the hierarchical diversity of his functions, does not consider that the superiority of mind over matter necessarily implies its independence of matter. In the first (Platonic) view the spiritual perfection of the worker would be definitely achieved apart from the perfection of the work, the latter being merely amorphous matter whose inner laws would only be a "means" towards a transcendent end. It would then make little difference what one does—the only reality is the love of God, which has nothing in common with the realities

of earth. But this is not so. Work, and the " civilisation of work " has its own value, for its own integrity, for its original efficacy, for the shaping of the world, for the historic destinies of humanity. It is not, of course, an end in itself in which man finds his final achievement, as in a Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat. Work is a purpose in its rightful place, a secondary purpose. It is not a means of perfection, nor a mere collection of utilities, advantages and prosperities which pious intentions will endow with morality. The true and only victory over Marxism will lie in the correct realisation of this property of work, at the junction of mind and matter, in the civilisation of man and in the quality of that civilisation and so, eventually, in the individual and collective incarnation of the grace of Christ.

We would even go so far as to state, as Maritain does, that this new awareness of man in his work—an awareness resulting from the internal revolution in the structure of work—is a historical benefit for human society as well as the basis for a new understanding of Christianity.[6] The spiritual aspect, naturally, remains predominant, but in a situation in which man's earthly welfare resulting from this civilisation of work—and indeed from political organisation in general—is no longer, as it was in mediaeval clericalized Christendom, a purely instrumental function. It is a scale of values which has attained maturity, with its inherent virtue and its specific efficacy. The consubstantiality of matter and

[6] Cf. J. Maritain, *Humanisme intégral*, Paris, 1936, (E. tr., *True Humanism*, London 1938) chap. VI: *Des chances historiques d'une nouvelle chrétienne*. These pages, which might almost be termed prophetic (they date from 1934), had a great influence on the generations of 1936, 1940 and 1945.

spirit in man leads us to the consubstantiality of man and nature, without prejudice to the specific difference between man and nature.

We have now reached a period in history when it is no longer a question of social progress alone, of structural reforms, or even of a political revolution, but, in the light of this progress and through these reforms, of establishing a *philosophy* of man which will incorporate, explicitly and organically, the truth and value of work in the sum total of human activity. "The idea of a civilisation of work is as much philosophical as political.[7] To use a term which is already current, we must consider the *humanism of work*, in the full meaning of the phrase. This raises the problem not only of a future educational programme which will transcend the classic and modern humanities, but will make a more profound study of the science and capacities of human work for the benefit of man in general. And here it is urgently necessary for Christian thinkers to establish a "theology of work" as defined at the beginning of this book, and of which we can now appreciate the scope and extent.

Again we could adopt another view of the human composite, a view which lays more stress on the fragility of spirit in matter, while at the same time retaining the irreducible interiority of the spirit. The uncontested master of this conception, or this spirituality, in the West, is still St Augustine, both on account of his experiences and of his teaching. His name is enough to guarantee its orthodoxy, in spite of the eventful history of his philosophy. St Bernard, à Kempis, Pascal, even Descartes—what a fruitful

[7] Lacroix, op. cit.

harvest, in what a variety of ages, countries, climates, experiences and philosophies! The great tradition of French moralists, clerical and lay, has handed it down so that now we find these teachings even in the cheapest manuals, catechisms and books of piety. These disciples of Augustine, Descartes and others not only denounce the risks incurred in such a confrontation of matter and the universe—and the deplorable effects of the industrialisation of this century give them ample grounds—but they even contest the principle of the substantial union of soul and body in this kind of ontological mixture which constitutes human personality, and in which work finds its justification, its truth, its historic rôle and consequently its Christian origin.

We will abstain from questioning not alone the orthodoxy, but even the Christian character of this theology. If we uncompromisingly described " man " as seen by St Thomas Aquinas, it is because we ahbor the eclecticism which sometimes leads well-meaning Christians to lose their keenness of intellect and efficacy of action. Having said this, and without any lessening of our loyalty, we welcome a fraternal discussion with the disciples of St Augustine, confident that by understanding them we will arrive at a better understanding of ourselves. A balanced ideology must be achieved in full possession of the relevant factors and alternatives, it must be fortified against the inevitable attrition of truth, which is made worse by the exhilaration of new discoveries.

Having said this, we must admit that we have little admiration for an intelligence which is founded on a refusal of the risks which are incurred in the confrontation of objects, those very objects which are

revealed to it by man and the universe. Fear is always a bad counsellor. In these circumstances, this philosophy is defeated by the violence of history. The Christian, even though he be a theologian, is consequently imprisoned in the limited confines of conservative casuistry. The determinism of these timid minds is confirmed by facts. The " spiritualism " of the nineteenth century (which no longer bore any traces of St Augustine's teachings!), under the pretext of saving the dignity of the mind and its pure interiority, ended up in the most insipid bourgeois liberalism, which was an aristocratic perversion of liberty, a hypocrisy of interiority and a death-blow to fraternity. Historians can understand the contemptuous reaction of Marx. We must beware of this decaying theology. It was these theories which, unfortunately, prevailed over the true Augustinian philosophy in the thinking of the Christians of that time, and which are indeed still prevalent amongst some Christians today.

So it would seem, in spite of appearances to the contrary, that the spiritual solution with its austere rejection of materialism, is too facile. Such a solution too easily ignores several aspects of the problem. The Thomist position, on the other hand, implies greater difficulties, since the free exercise of mind in matter in no way lessens the inviolable and supreme destiny of the spirit, or its power of interiority, or its subtle freedom in the trammels of determinism. St Thomas himself, in his own day and in situations which were not without parallel in ours, braved these difficulties. Without necessarily adopting his theology, we of the twentieth century can nevertheless appreciate its greatness of spirit.

The "Economic Man" and the Christian

Sileant theologi in munere alieno. "Let theologians look after their own affairs, they have no concern with those of others." The new exponents of international law who thus dismissed the ancient theologians in the eighteenth century had doubtless not a very easy conscience. The intemperance of their language, soon to be translated into terms of political and other institutions, betrays intentions which were far from being purely scientific. The angry tone of their indictment however should not cause us to ignore the fact that the problems which faced them were very real. The autonomy of objects and methods is an essential law of human knowledge, whose specific varieties constitute, both in thought and in action, the natural structure of the mind in its search for truth and unity.

Now it is a fact that theologians are inclined—in a more dignified manner than other men, perhaps,

but more readily too—to give way to a kind of intellectual impatience which causes them to precipitate the successive stages of various investigations, and insist on imposing a result before it is justified by research. True, in a Christian dispensation the theologian assumes the function of sage which the ancients conferred on philosophers. This exalted task of regulation and synthesis is, however, of an entirely spiritual nature, so that it cannot illumine other sciences without meticulously respecting their own character and aspirations. Intellectual clericalism is an obstacle to the purity of wisdom, and a violation of all the rules of good work.

But we must recognise that the scientist also on his side has laid claim to the rôle of sage, and has thought fit to issue, from within the limitations of his own discipline, a definitive explanation of man and the world. Physicists, biologists, psychologists and economists are easily tempted by the demon of metaphysics, and give out as absolute truth the knowledge acquired in their study of a particular sector of nature. It is nevertheless an understandable temptation. He who has never felt it has never experienced the intoxicating obsession of an idea. It seems even as if such ideas never come to fruition without some such moment of excitement. But for those who do not succeed in conquering this emotional weakness, there comes the antagonism of man and nature—nature which cannot thus attain its universal ends, and man who remains helpless in face of his earthly and spiritual destiny.

It is under the guidance of this principle and with this methodological reservation that the theologian

and the economist must come to terms, at a time when we witness one of the most important episodes of this dialectic of knowledge. In the course of the last century, man has for the first time clearly and scientifically realised his economic function. He has sought, and is still seeking, to determine the laws of his nature as a producer of goods. To the Christian, or to any spiritual thinker, this search may seem at first sight to be scarcely worthy of philosophic consideration. In fact, Christian thinkers did not concern themselves for a long time with these too materialistic studies, of which the chief consideration seemed to be desire for gain, and whose methods appeared to be reducible to unworthy techniques. The "mechanical arts," as they were called in the Middle Ages, are only inferior disciplines. Not a single theologian was present at the cradle of economic science.

However that may have been, we now have a world today in which man and nature are dominated by economic problems: the production, distribution and consumption of the fruits of the earth. It is not a question here of unrestrained greed and selfishness, which have prevailed down the centuries and will, unfortunately, still prevail in every generation. Here we are in the presence of a new awareness of human realities, tangibly experienced but now perceived in their own right—in their spiritual quality, their historic rôle, their capacity of salvation—as the subject-matter of a genuine science. Man and work, man discovering in his work the means of self-realisation, man finally becoming Man, in this highest of all activities—here we enter the domain of metaphysics.

Whether it be through classical economics, or more especially through Marxist philosophy, this science of Man, based on the analysis of material products, claims to solve the mystery of the human being, explain his history and define his destiny. How can Christians at first sight fail to be amazed and dumbfounded?

Dialectic of nature and grace

This is not, however, the first time that a "new man" has emerged in the history of mankind. Though the cosmic scope and deep humanity of this civilisation of work which is to interpret man in the twentieth century, revolutionise the classical systems of history, it is not out of harmony with what we have seen so far in the onward march of man's evolution. We should not be surprised that man has taken so many centuries to become aware of himself in work. The realisation of the spiritual law has often preceded that of the material. It took a formidable expansion in scale, and perhaps even the world-wide economic phenomenon of the second World War, before man at last came to realise, scientifically and intelligently, that his destiny is also achieved in matter, since his power and mission enable him to humanise it by his work, and so to accomplish the synthesis of man and of nature.

Is it strange that the Christian thinker should be surprised by this revelation? Would it not have been possible for this development—turbulent in growth but splendid in attainment—to have developed under its auspices? Here history lends weight to these questions. To answer them with theory is both too

abstract and too easy. This is not the first time that Christians have been involved, willingly or otherwise, in an upheaval of civilisation. As on the first occasion, when the Roman Empire in which they had taken root collapsed, they are momentarily at a loss, but they end by regaining their equilibrium in a better understanding of the action of grace in each succeeding Christian dispensation. Gradually, step by step, through success and failure, through long periods of equivocation and revolutionary upheavals (for example the Renaissance and the Reformation in the West), the elements of a theology of history are built up, a theology in which the relationship between nature and grace is defined, no longer statically, but in the context of the evolution of the human race.

We should be wrong to think that grace, merited for all by Christ, constitutes by this fact a fixed capital in relation to a humanity, whose earthly progress and actions have no connection with salvation except through the temporary intervention of persons. This is not so. Grace extends over time. We are well aware that sacred history is divided into two epochs, one preparatory to the coming of Christ, and the other fulfilling the incarnation, in the expectation of the end of time, when history will be consummated in grace. The catholicity of the Church, the body of Christ, is not only geographical—as is sometimes too superficially taught—but historical, whose rhythmic advance keeps time with that of humanity. Space and time, not space alone, are the measure of material objects. Grace permeates matter in time, and therein finds its greatest dimension on earth. The abstract and rationalist theology of the

eighteenth century, together with a philosophy which more or less contaminated it, has made us lose sight of the wonderful spectacle of world history, on which so many mediaeval *summae* were founded.

When a new continent emerges in human thought, when at the heart of a civilisation a new phenomenon is revealed, the Christian thinker may at first be taken unawares in common with the rest of his fellow-men. Soon, however, he must focus his mind on this new manifestation. For imperfect as it may be, it is a field which has already been redeemed and which must be used for its divine purpose. The Church fulfills herself in these temporal manifestations. In her unchanging faith and worship she sanctifies each emerging phase of human activity, as eternity identifies and absorbs each individual measure of time.

Some may say that this presence of the Church at the birth of civilisations, by which I mean the collective presence and not individual personifications of grace, can only constitute a spurious and provisional guardianship. How many historians praise the Church in this capacity only to dismiss her later as an anachronism! For them grace is not concerned with these considerations; her mission is to lead the soul towards the divine, regardless of circumstance, and not to organise economic systems on earth.

This is undoubtedly true. But here we have the connecting link between nature and grace, the interaction between civilisations and churches. This grace can only permeate, collectively and individually, by re-creating the substance of nature of which it must partake. No doubt grace, by its content and purposes, transcends the demands of nature and the desires of

civilisations. But these demands and desires are incorporated in it as the life-force of the grafted branch flows through it from the stock on which it has been planted. Then, supplying their needs and giving them shape, it brings them to full flower and independence. Grace begins by supplementing their early fragility; but soon, as though anxious to resume its supernatural tasks, it welcomes the development of their inherent autonomy.

The history of Christian doctrine through the ebb and flow of various movements shows more and more clearly this law of its development. While confirming the necessity of grace, the Church authorities emphasised in turn in their official pronouncements the value of reason and rational discipline against fideism, or the autonomy of political power against theocracy. In its social activities the Church first inspired and then handed over to the civil authorities, little by little, the various services which the community requires, such as public hospitals, social welfare, education, etc. The whole structure of the modern world in the West today is built on basic principles whose present secularisation still betrays their religious inception. Christians are consequently perfectly prepared to observe and even to favour the dawning of new dynamisms, long innate in man and now suddenly brought to light in the revolutionary glow of a new civilisation.

It must of course be admitted that the alliance between churches and social systems does not come about so peacefully. Grace and nature are united only through a secret and painful struggle as much in the recesses of the soul as in the achievement of knowledge

or social enterprise. All too often when new territories are thus laid open to exploration, the Christian thinker begins by being confused and perplexed. A leader of real stature is needed to define the balance between grace and the emerging "new man." We need only recall here the example of the introduction of the natural philosophy and anthropology of Aristotle into Western Christianity. It was classic because it provided Christianity with an admirable lesson and example.

The believer who had previously contented himself with a superficial idea of the world, and satisfied himself by discovering symbolic evidence of God on earth without investigating the nature of his creations, was suddenly made aware of the structure of the universe. He came to realise that each object has its own nature, which is the mainspring of its development and capabilities. By discerning its laws he succeeded first in understanding and then in conquering it, instead of having recourse to mysteries and symbols as a childish evasion of mundane reality. Of all these creations man is the most perfect. By discovering himself he becomes conscious of his supremacy at the same time as he becomes master of his destiny. The body is no longer a dead weight encumbering the soul exiled here on earth; it is an organ by which the external world impinges on the soul and through which the soul intervenes in the deterministic mechanism of the world. Finally comes the realisation of the powers of intelligence, the discovery of the laws of thought, and the exhilarating potentialities of reason, an exhilaration which was more acute than the aesthetic fervour of Medicean Florence two centuries

later. Jean de Meung's twenty-five thousand line poem of the *Roman de la Rose* reflects these feelings; beneath the faded allegories we sense the urge to self-glorification in the luxuriance of Nature and in the shining new discovery of Reason.

St Thomas Aquinas defined the status in Christian doctrine of this " new man " which the contemporary revival of Greek philosophy revealed in the middle of the thirteenth century. At this distance, and after the event, his message may seem simple and glorious. We learn from our historians that it was dramatic and weighed heavily on those who took part in it on one side or the other. Christianity was almost submerged under a wave of pagan naturalism in thought and conduct. In the heart of Paris, the intellectual bastion of the Church, Averroes and his colleagues were teaching that nature is intelligible in itself without recourse to God; that determinism is the law of the world; that intellect is self-sufficient to discover the essential and universal laws of the cosmos; that the soul does not emerge from its corporeal integument either for knowledge or survival; and that the individual is not an absolute value. Soon Marsilius of Padua was to carry these subversive theories to their social and political conclusions. For a whole century Christianity was put in peril by Aristotle. Albertus Magnus and St Thomas Aquinas incurred temporary disfavour for having discerned in this controversial heritage of the Greek Renaissance the innate qualities of nature, the power of reason, the psychical behaviour of the soul in substantial solidarity with the body and the natural laws of society. From this we may draw a moral among the many contained in the history of this movement.

Significantly, when the time came for the second renaissance of Classical philosophy, the great Renaissance, no thinker was found to relate grace to its teachings. The "modern world" was no longer Christian.

The Revelation of the "Economic Man" [1]

The "new man," product of our present industrialism, does not seem either to be developing under the auspices of grace.

In studying the course of civilisation and that of Christianity, it may seem an exaggeration to compare the natural philosophy of Aristotle with a scientific investigation of the economics of production. We can well understand that the renaissance of Greek naturalism and rationalism, the attraction of the *homo naturalis* of Aristotle, should challenge with its intellectual philosophy the concept of faith and grace. We hesitate nevertheless to attribute such far-reaching effects to the discovery, however recent, of the mechanism of the production of material goods, just as we hesitate to credit a noteworthy repercussion of industrial mechanics to the evolution of aesthetic form.

I believe that this rejection contains two misconceptions: a misunderstanding of the spiritual reality of the human values inherent in matter, and a misunderstanding of the metaphysical potential of thought relating to man as producer. On the one hand, and in theory, man is a unity of body and soul. The mind is so incorporated in matter that the

[1] We are using this expression here not in its exact historical sense, referring to classical economics, but in its general sense—man in his function as producer, independent of any doctrinal interpretation.

determinisms of matter destroy the mind if it cannot integrate them substantially; economic conditions affect the destiny of the spiritual activities of man. On the other hand, we have in fact witnessed the birth, and today we see the ascendancy, of a totalitarian conception of man, including his religious values, founded on a conception of labour and the economics of labour. Marx was not only an economist, he was, in the full sense of the term, a philosopher. It is this which sets him above all the classical economists. We may even say that there is such a thing as a Marxist humanism which, however tragically fallacious, is sufficient to revolutionise traditional humanism. We must not start by underrating the full extent of the arena and of its hero. Communism bears the aspect not only of a historic force, socially and politically, it is a far-reaching conception of man and matter, characterised by its own system of thought and belief. What we are witnessing is a spiritual revolution at the very core of an economic upheaval. Aristotle is still assailing the citadel of Christendom.

From the eighteenth century onwards, inspired especially by the stimulus of economic expansion, philosophers attempted to survey the economic structure as a whole, and to formulate its laws for the benefit of man. In this way, from the time of the physiocrats to that of Smith and Ricardo, a body of theory was built up, inspired by intellectual and technical enthusiasm, which sought with the aid of its own principles, dialectic, and vocabulary, to claim the production and free exchange of the fruits of the earth as the automatic basis of human progress and liberty. The humanitarian ideal of these theoreticians

developed into a New Jerusalem, presided over by a wise and philanthropic Providence. Harsh realities soon, however, exposed the fallacy of their *homo oeconomicus*. The spectacle of appalling poverty and misery which prevailed at the very moment when industrialism triumphed, provoked a violent reaction, which, in its turn, found expression in a new philosophy and humanism.

A philosophy which claims to derive the nature and value of work from its human basis is attractive and alluring. It may certainly be argued that contemplation—that exalted expression of spiritual life—is the better definition of man, futile though such a claim may seem. Even so, the activity of work is still the normal vehicle for man's perfection or his undoing. It is a means by which he can express himself and the only way, unfortunately, in which the mass of humanity can find self-realisation.

To make, to produce, is the activity which characterises man. He can bring this activity to its final conclusion, because it is within the reach of his spirit, a spirit embodied in matter, which achieves its perfection in the handling of material objects, while contemplation is a supernatural work, unfitted for an embodied soul. Here our faculties, in order to fulfil their homogenous development, find their natural outlet. We are in harmony with nature, which in spite of her resistance, seems to acquiesce in the exploitation of her forces and delights in the flowering of potentialities which man's action frees from the weight of matter. The world was bestowed on man that he might complete its creation, even while satisfying his needs from it.

But man in so exploiting nature as his property and receiving the benefits of its exploitation does not act as an isolated individual. Production is the result of a communal endeavour. Work is an intrinsic principle of the community of men; and this is not fortuitous, but constitutes the field of his development. Here man is first and foremost *zôon politikon*. Marx ridicules the economic "Robinson Crusoes," great and small, of the eighteenth century. His real target, however, is the lamentable product of "bourgeois society" whom he saw all around him, the man who finds in collective enterprise only the result of external pressures, at a time when the great mass of humanity is coming of age and becoming aware of its communal potentialities. Work is the deciding factor in this world-wide maturity, this attaining to real nobility, this discovery of man. No longer should labour be the object of commercial barter, with cost and sale price, the subject of a contract between two individuals. As labour becomes less dehumanised and more socialised, it shakes off the yoke of formal contract imposed on it by economics, and is promoted to becoming a part of life in general as lived by free men, conscious of their responsibilities and working towards the achievement of their development. This is the real revolution.

The scientific study of man is consequently not to be found in a statistical analysis. It must be sought in the historical tide which liberates man and achieves a communal society. By "society" is meant the evolution of man in time, and since the means of production are the mainspring of this society, since man expresses himself through his work, the historic situation of

the worker is the starting-point from which the perfection of man can be achieved through the struggle of opposing forces. The proletarian masses are destined to give reality to these hopes and desires, they will redeem the earth. In place of the abstract Hegelian dialectic Marx substitutes a "realism" which, as opposed to idealism, he terms "materialism," in which philosophy becomes a practical force, capable of intervention in the real world.

This proletarian apocalypse reveals within its framework of Marxist metaphysics a vital spark of creative inspiration. As always, it is the acute realisation of his misery that illumines the true nature of man. Marx's conception of his *homo oeconomicus* was born when he perceived the modern tragedy of man in bondage to labour. His metaphysical theory of production springs from his observation of the appalling conditions in which man destroys himself in the very act in which he should find exaltation. Work has become alienated from man. Here we reach the well-known and important thesis of the Communist philosopher, a thesis which is as mystical and prophetic as it is doctrinal. This is the humanism of Marx. Work is a subversive state which dehumanises; only in emancipating labour will man regain his real nature.

The Christian Attitude

What has been the Christian reaction to this profound and moving discovery of the nature of man—a revelation at one and the same time of his present wretchedness in work as it is, and his potential nobility in work as it should be?

A Christian, in the spirit of his Gospel heritage,

is ever mindful of human affliction; honouring the poor, keeping faith with the lowly, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, exalting the meek, placing his trust in truth, and cherishing his fellow-men, continually aware of the brotherly love which is the sign of God's presence. He is thus magnificently equipped to comprehend the tragedy of the proletariat and to achieve a philosophy of work. In actual fact, Christians have neither understood the proletarian drama nor the philosophy. In this incomprehension they showed the same failing as their contemporaries; but, after being overwhelmed by the French Revolution, they were even more handicapped and powerless. They behaved, of course, according to their lights, yearning over outcasts with love, and preaching the nobility of work, but always remaining on the moral plane where good works camouflage the ontological search for truth. Thus they had not even the spur of an uneasy conscience. Certain pious spirits have never, alas, understood the real significance of God becoming man.

It is probable that, in isolated cases, some Christians felt the same spiritual shock which the misery of the proletariat aroused in Karl Marx. Their evangelism was still fluid, but this compassion failed to awaken them to a realisation of the extent to which the capitalist world had disinherited the working class. Devotion offered no why and wherefore, it provided no body of knowledge. It provided no economic experiment, theory, technique, philosophy of needs and values, informed and presided over by a wise theology. This understandable weakness on the intellectual side inhibited their evangelical impulses.

The results seemed to be the disregard by some Christians of the triumph of injustice, blindness to distress, ignorance of the demands of love and fraternity, indifference to the destiny—and even of the salvation—of the masses. When they decided to produce a critique of capitalist and bourgeois liberal society, it was under serious handicaps of psychological, social and political inferiority, and added not an iota to the urgency of reform.

Marx, on the other hand, built up his own metaphysic of work, communal sociology and dialectic of history. This, as we have seen, was revolutionary material. He even—as his messianic imagery attests—elaborated his own religion and his own "theology." But it was the work of an atheist.

Communist Doctrines—Acceptable and Unacceptable

Here the believer, who up to this point has been in sympathy with the views of Marx, is brought to a stand-still. It scarcely becomes those who absented themselves to criticise results achieved in their absence. It is possible, however, to combine frankness and truth with the regard due to such a lofty conception. We need only replace a timid and defensive approach by an intellectual deepening of our faith and a new vitality.

This is no place to retrace the origin of Marxism, nor to analyse its inner structure. But it may have been noticed that in investigating its guiding principles, we left on one side the doctrinal framework in which they are embodied. This was not diplomacy, but appreciation. It is still in a spirit of admiration that we now approach principles and system as a

whole. The importance of Communism lies in the fact that it is neither a simple economic theory nor even a social anthropology, but a philosophy of man and humanity; its force is in its universality.

For this reason it would be too facile to accept the purely economic theses of Communism while rejecting its atheism. In the domain of economics, as we have said from the beginning, the theologian must naturally respect the economist's choice of subjects and methods; more than this, he must accept his hypotheses and the conclusions of his enquiries. It is no part of the theologian's province to discuss the abstract idea of property, nor to define the nature of capitalism. The theologian must observe these conceptions in their actual context and in historical perspective. If he does not do so, he is liable to fall into the pit of his own superficial judgments, which are meant to avoid his having to—as he would put it—" take sides in temporal matters." What a failure!

But we have also seen that these hypotheses must be placed in a completely Christian context in which the spiritual dynamism of economic realities will be clearly visible. And so while we agree in mind and heart with such a metaphysical analysis of work, of its nature, its present alienation, its communal force, its historic potentialities, we cannot accept that " theory of labour " according to which the whole nature of man is defined by his function as producer. Work is not the essence of man. Neither do we accept that social monism which atrophies the individual whom it claims to liberate. Our sociology and our evangelism, too, build great hopes on the realisation by the workers of the historic mission, the " philo-

sophical role of the proletariat." But while we recognise the demands for justice and liberation in the class struggle, we cannot agree with any tactics imperilling the brotherhood of man. Similarly, in each instance, we must make our stand-point clear, without entering into a discussion of each individual subject.

Just as we cannot deal with techniques in isolation, so we cannot draw a dividing line between the dialectical materialism which our religion condemns, and the Communist way of life, of which certain aspects might be praiseworthy. Dogma cannot be separated from morals; we have already censured "moralism" somewhat severely. The atheism contained in dialectic materialism is not just an accidental product of historical and social prejudice, it is an intrinsic principle of the system. Economic emancipation is inconceivable without religious "liberation," just as religious alienation is linked with economic alienation. What we must do is to show that religion is not a superstructure to be imposed on economic analysis. Above all, in doctrine as in action we must counteract the materialist motive of Marxism and prove that religion is not divorced from man. If we could dispel the anthromorphic conception of God which Marx, unfortunately, derived from the "bourgeois" theologians, it would help considerably.

In our approach to Marxist humanism it is not our intention to appropriate a share of his philosophy, picking out the good and rejecting the bad. We must restate for ourselves the problem of man in the light of new discoveries in a world in which work finally appears in all its power, personal and communal,

metaphysical and historical. A non-Christian was the prophet of this revelation; such an occurrence, as we have seen, is not isolated. Aristotle, as interpreted by Averroes—whose version was the most faithful, intellectually and textually (which is why the thirteenth century drama was not based on a falsification) —even Aristotle himself was not as insensible to the immaterial world as Marx. St Thomas was able to " baptise " him. But the dialectic of nature and grace can be applied to the *homo oeconomicus* as well as to the *homo naturalis*, for grace today strives to find its earthly sphere of activity in an economy in which matter, in man, is itself saved. To this end Christians have only to rely on their own Gospel and create from its precepts a theology which can take into account the historic growth of Christianity through changing civilisations, in time as well as in space.

Social Evolution

THE TIME was about the end of 1943 or the beginning of 1944. It was then that I had a far-reaching discussion with one of my colleagues—it was one of those interchanges of ideas which enable men to penetrate to the very heart of circumstances. You may recall what the situation was in occupied Paris. The minds of the people were assailed by misleading propaganda and their lives were in daily peril. Yet the more this oppression intensified, the more they re-discovered their real soul. Neither of us was very well-informed about the Resistance movement, with its frail net-work extending in defiance of torture; but we had a vivid realisation of its spiritual and political strength. As we tentatively explored the extent of its influence, I expressed my firm conviction that the Liberation would bring not only the military expulsion of the enemy, but, even more significantly, the joyous and triumphant fruition of social and political ambitions which had been long and labori-

ously developing, and which would finally achieve their human expression in an economic revolution. From the stand-point of "Christian Socialism," strongly attacked by some, but approved of in high quarters, this event would embody the awakening consciousness of certain human values previously retarded and immature. The collective realisation of the dignity of work would raise the worker and, even more important, the community of workers towards freedom and individuality. Remembering the prophetic pages of Maritain's *True Humanism*, in which ten years previously he defined the "historic rôle of the proletariat" in a Christian economy, I brought our discussion to a close by saying that what we were experiencing was more than a war, it was a "revolution," or rather, that the war was only the outward and violent detonation of a revolution. Here lay the heart of the drama, and its unconquerable promise.

Some months later, in the euphoria of the Liberation, I met my colleague. Recalling our discussion, he reminded me of my prophecy, which to him had seemed rather ironical. "Now you see," he said, "that there has been no revolution!" His conception of a revolution was, of course, a romantic picture of a series of violent upheavals, mob terror and ruthless executions. This brings me to my main theme. My friend's somewhat short-sighted views betray a real lack of perception which has long been general among us. We have ignored the collective energy which governs the functioning of the world, the evolution of mankind whose depths are gradually being invaded by a secret tide of aspiration. We have ignored the magnificent and uncompromising laws

which impel even the most individual freedom towards a common destiny. We have tended to oppose this *social evolution* more or less consciously to *social order*, as if it were a transient and rather regrettable feature of a permanent and homogenous substance, rather than a real and intrinsic part of its deepest being.

A Christian is always tempted to apply indiscriminately to human and earthly pursuits the eternal values of which he knows himself to be the bearer. His idealism leads him to gloss over the stages of the wonderful process in which, day by day, man incorporates spirit in matter, according to his own nature, and, within the moving tide of history, creates the rock of eternity. This is why many of our predecessors were contaminated by the classic rationalism of the eighteenth century, elaborating a political economy which aimed at establishing, deductively and with no regard for experience, a permanent system of laws; an order eternal in human society as in the realm of ideas, whose realities would be only a stereotype formed by an intellectual dictate.

To combat this spurious intellectualism and these false metaphysics, we must urgently restore the essential dimension of man, who cannot attain eternity except through living in time, and who, in reality, can only become master of himself by identification, as a member of the community, with the dynamic of history. I strongly deplore, therefore, the latent opposition which we tend to insinuate between *order* and *evolution*, and I am surprised to observe how long we have continued, even in the ranks of "Catholic Socialism," to ignore the fact that the social nature of

man, expressly defined, necessarily implies the "march" of humanity, which builds up from day to day the material structure of his economy. If in reality man can neither be defined nor exist without a context in the society or societies of which he is a member, in the same way social life in its turn can neither be conceived nor realised apart from the evolution in time of this humanity as a body. Social facts are not atoms thrown together in the pale reflection of eternal verities; they are—and are thereby enhanced—moments of a collective evolution in which the most personal acts are revalued in their social context. Significantly, it is the same false teachers of so-called classical economics—the heirs of Cartesian rationalism—who with doctrinaire logic exalt the abstract liberty of the individual and ignore the realities of history.

At a time when we cannot refrain from taking our part—anxiously perhaps, but none the less with firm confidence—in the aspirations of humanity on the march, I visualise the life of human societies advancing steadily in face of reversals and humiliating failures. Even the chaos through which it makes its way seems to affirm, in perspective, the cosmic determinism by which it is impelled; "advancing and progressing," as Maritain says, "thanks to the historic dynamism which is the product of intellect and freedom, and because of those technical discoveries which sometimes outstrip the mind but require by their nature to be the instruments of the mind." [1]

In proportion as this evolution more fully realises

[1] J. Maritain, *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle*, Paris 1945, p. 35 (E. tr., *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*, London 1944).

communion between men, it acquires more liberty, if it is true that for the great mass of humanity individual freedom, down the centuries, has been geared to communal development. My aim here is to show the profound truth, inherent in the nature of man himself, and the laws of this dynamic tension between the individual and society, so that we may come to a true understanding of what it means to enter into the course of history—the outward expression of social evolution.

It is the incontestable greatness of the nineteenth century to have definitely integrated in the knowledge of man this historic dimension of a concrete ideal, and to have expressed, sometimes in the form of a parable and sometimes in weighty dialectical formulae, the mysterious potential at the fugitive intersection of past and future. This is not the place to describe the exhilaration and the errors of this discovery, nor the various systems to which it gave birth, and which it would be foolish to condemn while failing to appreciate their creative impulse. We note, however, in support of our previous assertions, that those who most intensely, if not most accurately, perceived this movement of humanity, were those who were most convinced of the fundamental social instinct of man, corresponding to his basic needs. Man's historic existence, even his entire destiny, is revealed in his hardly-won solidarity. Whatever interpretation we may give to this double and unique awakening of social and historic consciousness, it appears as a spiritual event of prime importance, whose influence on the total humanism that the world of the twentieth century demands we can now appreciate.

The Christian, if faithful to his convictions, is well aware of this new renaissance. As things are, I am glad to say, this social and historic realisation forms the shock element which galvanises the believer and, following on the inertia and obscurantism of the nineteenth century, places him in the battle-field of human advancement. This incarnation, because it is in its mystery a doctrine of the Incarnation, infers by its essence an involvement of destiny in time, whether the destiny of the individual, or—more important still—the destiny of humanity. Time, as a historical reality, is not an amorphous and meaningless receptacle for actions which might equally be momentary or eternal. Time has a texture, a direction, a planned extension, which is to say that its future and its purposes are already present in some sort, giving it the character of an anticipation, a promise, a messianic tension through which it is ever new and as it were transcends itself in a perpetual discovery, through the free-will of the individual. It is measured by "events," divine events, which endow it with reality and value, until it reaches its consummation in a *plenitudo temporis* which, far from ending it, will consecrate, humanly and divinely, its progress. It is a means of sanctification, ever since God as man entered into history in person, as into the river Jordan to receive baptism. Consequently, the more we perceive the historic reality of man, the more fitted we shall be to comprehend God's plan of salvation, the action of grace in this community, that "mystical body" in which, from generation to generation, group by group, in "movements" as we now call them, humanity is divinely incorporated.

If, thus, the Christian economy finds its own logic in a historic view of man, we are already actively participating in this social evolution whose laws are seen today in the most mystical desires as in the most material limitations. The advent of the proletariat, the socialisation of contemporary life—these phenomena which give rise to so much anxiety—will assume the temporal dimension which will express their human dynamism. In reality, is not the rise of the proletariat the revelation, an equivocal revelation, unfortunately, but the all-powerful, bitter and triumphant perception of that "historic dynamism" whose nature we have still to explore and whose laws we have yet to discover? And since historical progress is founded on the solidarity of men, will not socialism, even with all its formidable implications, lead to this wonderful communion in which man finds both self-realisation and liberty?

In any case, too much importance cannot be attached to this awakening, both dual and unique, of history and social consciousness. Every great step forward in modern times, whether in art, science, philosophy, poetry, or even in spiritual life, has been achieved in, and through, an awakening of consciousness of this kind. This realisation is brutal and far-reaching. It is disconcerting for the intellectual. and alarming for the economist. It comes alike to poor and humble—to these perhaps more intensely—and to philosopher and statesman. It is, however, vigorous and full of potentialities for anyone who has not lost faith in the advance, ever faltering but ever renewed, of the community of man towards liberty. We must not consider it as a blind and anarchic instinct to be

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conquered—economically, juridically and metaphysically—by extraneous reason. On the contrary, it leads us, as if prophetically, towards a knowledge of man, of human values, which seemed until now "only to grope its way at random, shaped by external necessity, in the midst of an endless series of apparent hazards," [2] in this encounter between man and the fruitful soil of nature. To this realisation we too shall come when, at the end of our analysis, we discover in the inner application of collective phenomena, in the awareness, both individual and communal, of ourselves, the final source and real understanding of social evolution.

Here, as we embark on an analysis which is necessarily abstruse, I rely on the warm and indispensable charity which cannot fail to be aroused in our hearts and minds by your sympathy, both confident and critical, with this realisation of the new man of the twentieth century. For we are not dealing simply with an impressive psychological phenomenon, but exploring a new field of knowledge, with this fundamental perception through which the ontological foundations of social reality are revealed.

Teachings of History

Let us go back in time and consider, with our new anthropological interest, a social era which constituted one of the most vital and significant periods in the march of history. This was the era which saw the liquidation of serfdom in Western Europe, by the change-over from feudalism to the freer régime of corporations and communes. Leaving aside the variants, the hazards, the action and reaction

[2] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Études philosophiques*, p. 49.

of innovations and adaptations, and confining ourselves to the main sociological laws, we can thus trace the main outlines of evolution.

If I dwell on this period, it is not from a desire to display erudition, but in order to observe on what bases and by what means humanity, quickening its pace, marks out a new path for its advance. I shall have to emphasise this aspect in order to show the links which gradually join economic facts to spiritual aspirations, even to the religious attitude of Christians.

For three centuries Europe had been living in a feudal economy in which, owing to the brutal dissolution of the previous forms of society and the marked decrease in trade relations, land had become the sole medium of economic, financial, social and even political life. A man could only attain security and liberty, such as it was, by being bound to the soil. The whole relationship was based on the ownership of land. The " homage " by which a man acknowledged himself to be the man of the " seigneur," depended on the bestowal on the vassal of land, or, at any rate, of a fixed revenue derived from the land. The benefice —or as it is commonly called, the fief—was an economic reality on which was based the vassal's " service " and loyalty, the latter being socially and religiously confirmed by an oath of allegiance, the spiritual keynote of the system. Parallelling the land and the individual tenancy, the principle of authority (*potestas*) was bound up with ownership of the soil (*dominium*), and freedom could neither be conceived nor realised except within the limits of the economic subjection of one man to another. Such was serfdom.

The twelfth century saw great economic and

demographic changes. It saw people coming together in a unity of effort for the cultivation of land and the distribution of goods. Production was increased tenfold; there was more thorough technical advancement. By the invention of the horse-collar, for example, draught animals, which then formed the main motive power, could produce twenty-five times more than before, thus setting free very many men for higher work. Markets were organised and fairs arranged far outside the feudal boundaries. Already the great traffic routes for men and goods were being planned on a continental scale, in Flanders, Burgundy and Northern Italy. Improved machinery, especially for weaving, gave a foretaste of industrial abundance. But the feudal lords understood neither the economic transformation nor the sources of wealth which they had neither created nor protected. Nor did they understand the stirring of souls caused by the new way of life. They remained apart from its orbit, and soon were fiercely resisting the "disorder" which was setting itself up outside their sworn hierarchies and their now useless privileges. Soon, too, the wide-spreading boundaries of the new territories began to over-lap their enclosed domains and their jurisdictions. Corporate hegemonies were created, corresponding to the nerve-centres of economic activity. The towns, which were the local and intellectual headquarters of arts and commerce, sponsored new organisations which progressively freed trader and craftsman from the yoke of the old legal system. The new order was built up of corporations and guilds on the economic and communes on the political side, their collective emancipation assured

by charters of freedom. "By decree of divine Providence," says one of these charters, "all men born equal are entitled from birth to a natural freedom . . ." This was obviously a direct challenge to the old feudal loyalties and was naturally countered by the interdiction, even in clerical jurisprudence, of the "communes." "A modern and abominable term," complained Guibert de Nogent, the celebrated chronicler, liegeman of the old régime, who witnessed this evolution without ever understanding its portent.

The meaning of the new name "commune" is obvious from its derivation, and later translations and transpositions have left it unchanged. "Commune" represents the realisation of a common good, in which each and all feel themselves a part, the community of material interests ensuring moral co-operation. Till then, the vassal was bound in ascending order of allegiance to his lord as his direct superior, an allegiance whose economic foundation supported and guaranteed its social benefits of security and (relative) liberty. Now a new oath of allegiance bound men together, but this time it was the expression of a "horizontal" or class solidarity, in a realisation of the material and spiritual benefits which could be acquired and organised by a communal action. Collective charters were substituted for individual contracts of loyalty; the beneficiaries deferred to the good of the whole community and no longer to an individual; at the same time their *jura et libertates* were guaranteed. The old oath of allegiance was abandoned, causing great offence to conservative moralists, who were unmoved by the spiritual greatness of the manifestation of a communal

conscience, expressing in the freedom of the individual this new acceptance of group authority. The exercise of authority is no longer, of course, bound up with ownership of land, nor are economic values. The exercise of authority is an attribute of the powers that the community sets up to administer collective property.

During the period of this transition from fief to commune, men gradually became more self-reliant in their actions, acquired a sense of personal responsibility, a taste for initiative and that adaptability which testifies to man's confidence in himself when faced with all the unpredictable problems of a newly-opening world. Intellectual life and the organisation of the urban schools for the rising generations embodied the same ideals as those which inspired the municipal corporations and magistrates in the government of the towns. In the university colleges the very facts of free association and democratic régime are enough to show how far they had travelled since the days of the old monastic schools which, in their enclosed domains, set among a static population, ruled over by a patriarchal abbot, were an integral part of the majestic feudal system which formed the territorial basis of monarchism. The universities, like church spires, were a typical product of this changed mediaeval world.

Certain far-seeing Christians understood the modern scale of values and allied themselves, even at the cost of disunity, with the institutions in which these ideas were incorporated. The very fidelity with which they adhered to the Gospel spirit enabled them the more easily to identify themselves with this new world,

untroubled by a certain animosity against the feudal priests which prevailed therein. Such " evangelism " was not without is dangers. For fifty years it threatened to disrupt the stability of the Church, owing to a failure to recognise the fundamental structure of Christian hierarchic and sacramental community beneath transient and extraneous circumstances. However, St Francis and St Dominic succeeded where the Vaudois failed, and despite some short-lived opposition the mendicant Orders formed the apostles of the new Christendom.

A new philosophy was born. Its exponents, now more aware of the cosmic factors affecting man's function and destiny on earth, drew on the resources of Greek philosophy and Byzantine theology to counteract an Augustinian intropsection which, fostered by a facile idealism, was tending to separate inner reality from social expression. To their new way of thinking, salvation was inseparable from terrestrial affairs.

The world-wide diffusion of Christian beliefs and culture, which was then the fixed goal on the horizon of a forward-moving civilisation, was now gradually ceasing to be identified with the destinies of the Holy Roman Empire. This theocratic creation of a bygone age owed its downfall to the great monarchic states which were formed at the expense of the feudal system. Politics were now based on economic facts and combined the work of various progressive forces, including a re-awakened Church. Such a revolution may well have been, as many historians consider, the starting-point of modern civilisation. Let us take it, in any case, as an important example of that social evolution whose laws and nature we are discussing.

We could perhaps study—and indeed we should, in order to arrive at a more profound analysis—other examples and other periods. Having dealt with the foregoing in its complete cycle, however, let us rapidly enumerate the salient features of similar evolution, focal points in the perspective of history, as we come to the present day:

1 The institution of the national state and its evolution, through the centuries, developed a high degree of political organisation and emphasised the human values of the national community.

2 Later, the civic brotherhood of the democracies in spite of the sufferings and disorders which it caused, achieved the victory in principle of liberty and social fraternity.

3 The amazing technical discoveries of the nineteenth century, heralding the machine era, upset all the laws of production and led to the concentration of industry, wealth and population. A consequence of this was the bitter struggle through which social evolution reached its culmination today: the basic liberation of work by the transformation of the factory into a community of workers. The liquidation of the liberal-capitalist proletariat is the twentieth century equivalent of the liquidation of serfdom.

4 Population problems focus our attention once again on the situation of the family as part of worker and national communities, in which the family is sometimes enslaved and sometimes helped administratively and politically.

5 Finally, the progressive development, in communities created by religious bodies and in the

relationship between Christian and lay societies in the West, of the natural impulses of man—mutual aid, social security, culture—which were originally fostered by the monastic institutions and later (but not without a struggle) emancipated in a régime in which the autonomy of social and political functions led to what Maritain calls a secular Christianity. Thus the encouragement in the twentieth century Church of a lay movement resulted in what we know as Catholic Action.

And so on. But it is enough for our purpose to have indicated the main outlines, so that we can now trace the elements, course and interactions of some typical evolutions.

Socialisation

Social evolution has its definite and primary origin in the phenomenon of socialisation, that is, by the inclusion of one or more human activities in a process in which the coming together of the various individual members of a group forms the means and creative principle of its activities. Owing to the co-operation imposed by the pressure of new techniques, man is integrated into vast enterprises for production and distribution, in which his psychological, moral and intellectual behaviour must obviously be modified. Père Bigo has fully described the current aspects of socialisation, its effects and causes in contemporary life. Here we shall confine ourselves to considering this phenomenon as the basis of social evolution, for instance in the obvious example of the era of the mediaeval Communes. Then the system of work, production and distribution, the economics of the

urban groups, even the desire for education, produced and sustained hitherto unknown communal loyalties, giving birth to that historical dynamism which impels mankind to progress. The realisation of this solidarity is a decisive indication of growth at every stage of human evolution; and by discovering its origin we can form an estimate of its scope.

Without going into their variants and stages, let us firmly underline the essential character of such solidarities. Socialisation does not consist of a juxtaposition of individual acts, whose total gains weight by its volume alone. It is a collective concentration, transcending the individual, of the human values involved, so that the whole is more than the sum of the parts and differs from them in efficiency and in fact. It is not here a question of interaction between individuals, but of the multiplication, or rather of a totalisation of a force begotten by the group as such. Let me illustrate this principle by the elementary example of the family community. Man and wife are not merely two individuals, they form a unit, imbued with creative power by its very solidarity. We can never attach sufficient importance to this kind of social physiology, which has led so many sociologists to compare social life to an organism. The comparison is not always correct, but it is exact in so far as it illustrates the economic and spiritual unity of all socialisation.[3] Here we come to the radical error of liberalism, which considers society as a combination of various rights, and only recognises its human values

[3] It is well-known that one of Marx's main themes was to treat social phenomena as Darwin treated the development of the organic world.

in these.[4] This lack of comprehension resulted in their failure to recognise that historic dynamism whose truth and strength we discovered above—that dynamism whose simplest and most formidable expression is the proletariat.

It is not the rights of the individual as such which are the prime and direct movers of human progress, as would be simple contractual associations. It is the complex of aims, myths and inspiration which forms the soil of history in which the individual and individual rights can take root. We can foretell the determinist path which each individual act will follow in such an association and assimilation with the group.

We now reach the ultimate cause of all social processes. It is, more than any motive of reason or interest, the intrinsic nature of man, this deep principle on which instincts and reasons are based, and without which man can neither exist nor be explained. Aristotle long ago defined this social nature of man, but here we have this definition " freed from the characteristically static conception of Greek thought, and made dynamic by this revelation of the flow of history." [5] Thus, each time that economic evolution offers new material for man's collective activity, his instincts themselves supply the urge towards social evolution; and, since the material itself is novel, the impact on society is all the more profound and its impetus launches a new generation in history.

[4] This is the criticism which Marx as well as Christians make of the Rights of Man: it bases freedom not on the union of man with man but on their separation.

[5] J. Maritain, *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle*, Paris, 1944, p. 49, (E. tr., *The Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, London 1945).

Here we see the part played by economic factors in the phenomenon of socialisation. The most important of these are technical discoveries. In classical times, man freed himself from slavery by new methods of production. The use, in the Middle Ages, of horse-collars for their draught animals enabled large numbers of men to gain liberty from the material and spiritual bonds of serfdom. Free movement of goods and persons, the extent of which depends on the technical efficiency of transport and locomotion, is an extremely powerful factor of socialisation. Modern mechanisation is certainly at the origin of proletarian poverty; but, in itself, it is an instrument of liberation. It is, in any case, at the root of the formidable growth of socialisation which dominates the history of the twentieth century. Techniques condition economic systems; this is a law of social evolution. An essential feature of economic growth is that while established systems conserve acquired privilege, techniques, with their objective determinism, open the way to further progress and supply the motive power of historical advance.

Community Consciousness

Can this be considered technological materialism? Yes, but such techniques are the vehicle of a spiritual energy developed by collective consciousness which has inspired and constituted a new type of human activity. In the field of economics, this energy is a psychological phenomenon of the greatest importance which manifests, I might almost say, a social ontological value. Socialisation is achieved by the perception of a common good, previously latent in matter and

now to be released by the intelligence of man. The charters of freedom of the mediaeval trade guilds and corporations were necessitated by the urgencies of a prosperous commercial economy, but they are also the product of a semi-mystical solidarity. This solidarity was embodied in the communes, reinforced by the evangelism of the mendicant Orders, and defined by St Thomas Aquinas in the social theory, derived from Aristotle, of the common good. These are not mere superstructures, but represent the need for technical resources to ensure the full realisation of the community's potentialities. In the twentieth century, mechanisation, with its arbitrary concentration, will intensify the class-consciousness of manual workers all over the world, as they discover in this immense feeling of solidarity the true meaning and social expression of their liberation. Thus will the working class provide the sociological background, in the transformation of the capitalist régime, for a spiritual advancement of humanity, so long as they are not led astray by mistaken philosophies.[6]

The radical dilemma of socialism is that the proletariat, in its historic rôle, finds itself at the meeting-point of impersonal techniques and of the communal instinct, which demands freedom as it itself is generated by industrial concentrations. The inertia of slavery and initiative, pessimism and optimism, true and false mystiques are set against one another in that unstable equilibrium which provides the drama and excitement of history.

This equilibrium is, however, better seen as the symmetry and balance between the body and soul of

[6] Cf. J. Maritain, *Humanisme intégral*, pp. 246-252, (E. tr., *True Humanism*).

man on the march, or, let us say, their consubstantial union. The body is the economic potential whose actions and destinies are pre-conditioned by the forces of production. The soul is the realisation, in a community of men united by their membership of this determinate milieu, of the implication of their lives in its destinies, not as individuals, but as members of the group. This realisation of the common good generates a motive power which organises, differentiates and animates the body, even if in a troubled growth. This power is the real begetter of liberty, if by liberty we understand not the extraneous gift by a "good" dictator or a "good" master, but reckoned by the extent of its participation in the common good. Man is determined by his class status (Marx); it is now the consciousness of men which determines their being, in an inner progress which is henceforward a force of mind and of freedom. Technical advances may have outstripped the mind, but they must, by their very nature, be instruments of this mind.

In *Problèmes humains du machinisme industriel* Friedmann describes the stages of technical civilisation and the reversal of values caused by economic changes. He gives a most significant example of the evolution resulting from this inward force of liberation.[7] Analysing the theory of the rationalisation of labour which, according to Taylor, claimed to increase production by separating thought from action, he tells us that the best worker was supposed to be the one who, void of all intelligence and free-will, gave

[7] G. Friedmann, *Problèmes humains du machinisme industriel*, Paris, 1946

himself up the most passively to the automatism of the machine and became no more than a soulless cog-wheel in it. But here, in spite of Taylor, the psychotechnicians re-discovered the importance, from the point of view of production alone, of the human elements of labour: the worker's morale, environment, relationship with his fellows, education other than technical, and joy in his work. But how can we ensure all this, in these vast modern industrial complexes? The next step forward must be to integrate the worker into the factory conceived as a community, to ally technical improvements with genuine participation based on the fraternal solidarity of the workers. Work will then recover its original quality of communion, as Pius XII reminded us in his message to the Social Week: "Transcending the distinction between employers and employees, which threatens to become increasingly marked, there is work itself . . . which has the power, by its very nature, of drawing men into a true and intimate union." The worker is then no longer, as philosophers say, an "object" (e.g. work as a commodity), but a "subject," a subject with rights and duties, a human being. Let us say that he is no longer, in the words of the economist, a mere "wage-earner."

With the rebirth of liberty comes the rebirth of the individual. Community, in spite of appearances to the contrary, thus eventually leads to the development of personality. Once again we have an admirable example in the family, which is the primal and elemental community. It is the communion of man and woman which unites their individualities. It is their physiological and psychological determinism

which engenders, in their love, their free-will. One of the most moving experiences, from a sociological and Christian point of view, is to see a home in which a husband and wife, perhaps immature from circumstances of birth, education and environment, discover, in the full realisation of their love and union, an all-powerful force which itself creates and enriches their individualities. The more complete is the mystery of love, the more freedom it confers. This is the secret of all true communion. At every stage of communalisation, the force of collectivisation leads, in a similar growth and through material determinism, to a similar achievement, by the action of a similar free-will. Such is the rhythm of social evolution.

Cosmic Perspectives

Today we are living at a time when the effects of this social evolution are world-wide. Should we be surprised at the feverish rapidity of its development? We are faced with all the phenomena of the stringent mutual economic needs, the stupifying speed of communications, the frequent stirring-up of races, the uprooting and transplanting of whole populations, the direction of leisure and educational propaganda, financial trusts and intellectual centralisation, the growth of the proletariat and totalitarian régimes; here we have more than enough matter for urgent concern. How, in this bureaucratic ant-heap, are we to live, think and act, with that minimum of inner solitude which is necessary for intellectual life and the exercise of free-will?

Here we must enlarge our field of investigation

to include these new measures. In order to place this social evolution in the scheme of the universe, let us extend our survey of that territory of matter in which, as we saw, reason and freedom are based. This collectivisation of humanity, says Fr Teilhard de Chardin [8] in an audacious extrapolation of science, is not a sudden and unforeseen happening, but the natural result and culmination of a fundamental process of grouping in the progressive elaboration of organised matter. "It is impossible to reflect on this dual basis, structural and evolutionary, of the social events which affect us, without first suspecting, and then gradually being convinced by the evidence, that the ever-increasing collectivism of the human species is none other than a higher form of molecular cohesion on the surface of our planet." Our science of the universe, its infinite dimensions and space, suggests that concentration of elements governs the successive stages of appearance of life in the cosmic scale below man, from electrons to the atom, from atoms to molecules, from molecules to cells and so on up to the planets in celestial galaxies, and, at a given moment, the birth of consciousness in the human being. Such is the law which can be observed as each stage is achieved. This evolution is necessarily discontinuous, but the intrinsic novelty of each step only reinforces and manifests the necessity of synthesis. The development of consciousness is linked with a higher degree of organisation. Even in the infra-human world, there are affinities, sympathies and

[8] Cf. *inter al. Reflexions sur le progrès*, Peking, 1941; "Vie et planètes," in *Études*, May 1946, pp. 145-169; "Une interpretation biologique plausible de l'histoire humaine" in *Revue des Questions Scientifiques*, Jan. 1947, pp. 7-37.

inner magnetisms which, far from weakening the individual entities, enrich and liberate them. Have we not arrived at this stage, when human beings, cramped on their narrowing planet, realise despite the worst evils of totalitarianism the truth of their common nature and destiny and, by so doing, enhance their own individualities? Not in the ant-heap which destroys human values, but the spiritual socialisation in which, by analogy, we see the working of the immutable law that individuality is engendered by the community.

The collective evolution of humanity is interwoven with the evolution of life, even with the evolution of the universe. Man, and free-will, are based in nature and its determinisms. His moral and intellectual life is not superimposed on a heterogenous universe, the exploitation and moulding of which will never be within his capabilities. Work, typical activity of man, down to its technical and economical substratum, is a factor of true socialisation and a principle of communal life. The worker, however, must be a member of this community, instead of being diverted from it by outside influences. Only thus—for such is the lesson of history—will he find individuality and liberty.

History and Free-will

The intervention of man in this process, with his intellectual and moral values, is no more alien to the deterministic explanation than man himself is to the universe. Man's free-will itself becomes an element in the causal sequence as an accelerator of evolution. In the integration of the individual with society personal freedom and social necessity eventually

coincide, a far-off goal perhaps, but the measure of our advance.

We cannot now fail to see the logical results of our analysis of this communion. It has been accomplished, consciously, through the sternest economic and—one might almost say—biological necessities. From the beginning it tended, of its own nature, towards a community of feelings, of liberties, or, as we say today, of existences. It is not a question of going back on our research, but neither must we break the links of the dialectic between community and individuality. Once free will is present it is sovereign, like the soul in the body. Deterministic processes have brought individuals together, but without free-will this amorphous assemblage remains a collection of solitary individuals, enslaved one to the other, without any possible future. Lacking the fraternal instinct their solidarity is a solidarity of the damned. The confrontation of an individual with another is a spiritual confrontation, a reciprocal free collaboration of wills, like a fruitful interchange of ideas. Without losing anything of its content, without cutting itself off from the universe, social evolution thus becomes the result of free-will, of a free-will which can face any task. Without it, as we know by experience, there would be no liberty of the citizen in the political community, no liberty of the worker in the community of work, and no liberty of a wife in physical communion. For, although humanity is not a society of mere individuals, the only human communities are communities of individuals, individuals who exist only in proportion to their reciprocity with others, and find in this, spiritually and economically, the path of their destiny.

It may be thought that these influences are too subtle to have had any perceptible influence on the slow and anonymous unfolding of history. But the great figures—genius, saint, poet, leader of men, sage or hero—appear only in a setting in which their minds can find sustenance. Augustus, in the little village which bore Romulus, would not have been Augustus. Napoleon could not have achieved fame in the time of Francis I; St Thomas would not have written the *Summa* in the Benedictine cloisters to which his parents destined him; Michelangelo is unthinkable apart from the Renaissance; Plato—even St Paul—could not visualise a world without slaves. They are all the expression, the product—perhaps the creatures—of their times.

But they were also the creators of their period, not only because they developed its aesthetic poetic, religious and philosophic resources, but above all because their spirit—genius, heroism, sanctity—endowed these resources with their eternal values of truth, hope and love, the supreme forces of history. From Antigone to Gabriel Péri it is the " rebels " who ensure these energies to the community of mankind against dictators and false communities, and compel the forces of destiny. The time of history is the material of eternity.

Body and Soul

Nature and spirit, deterministic of the evolution and free-will of the individual, essence and existence, these are therefore the bases of social evolution, dissimilar bases whose antagonism must not be glossed over, but which are also interwoven into one another,

reciprocally and co-essentially, in the inherent constitution of man, who is at the same time matter and spirit. Let me conclude by showing, in this constitution, the ultimate reasons for this complexity and this unity.

On several occasions we have used the analogy of body and soul, the co-essential principles of man, to describe the inter-relation of determinism and free-will, the two factors of social evolution. This is more than an analogy, it is an explanation. The union of radically differing body and soul is the final reason for man's existence and his dual nature. Man, because he has a body, exists in time, and is a member of a temporal community. Because he has a soul, he gives a spiritual dimension to time and to community, transcending the determinisms of matter. Now, body and soul are not merely in juxtaposition, or intermingled, with the soul uneasily burdened with the body, and free-will finding its expression only by escaping the determinisms of the group, with an individuality extraneous to a nature linked with the universe. Human personality exists by the *substantial* union of body and soul, that is to say, not by the conjunction of two autonomous realities but by the ontological immersion of one in the other, so that everything issuing from the one also issues from the other. Apart from its bodily fabric the soul can neither be born nor grow.[9]

If this is so, if the spirit of man is really so tenuous that it can subsist only in matter and accomplish even

[9] This is not the place to show that this substantial unity of body and soul does not hinder the immortality of the soul, but that the soul without the body is unfulfilled.

the most spiritual actions of its destiny only in matter, we maintain the unity of the two forces by which we defined this historical energy at work in social evolution, just as we consider the two co-ordinates which constitute time as the essential dimension of man. Matter enters into history, because it enters into the definition of man. Certain Christian philosophers have been led by a false spirituality to divorce matter from the nature of man, and by so doing have repudiated history.

I realise that in putting forward these views I am inclining towards a certain conception of man: the conception proposed by St Thomas Aquinas. Other philosophies, following Plato or Descartes, who consider mind and matter as two distinct substances, are theoretically tenable and permissible from the Christian point of view. I certainly grant both their orthodoxy and their human value, not from eclecticism, but because all systems, even in anthropology, are imperfect. But I definitely agree with the philosophy which considers the human person, body and soul, as a whole.[10] This is confirmed by our observation of social evolution.

Consequently, I may add that I agree with a philosophy which considers the universe as a whole of which man is an integral part. This is what Marx called the consubstantiality of man and nature. Man has need of the cosmos both in his birth and in the

[10] I should point out that this Thomist anthropology is that of St Thomas, and not of those modern theologians who, succumbing to Cartesian and other influences, have regrettably weakened his two main themes: his conception of the interiority of the spirit, by diluting the Augustinian theses, and his social doctrine, by serious neglect of the reality and rôle of the cosmos in the condition of man.

fulfilment of his destiny, and, on the other hand, man is the maker—the co-creator, if I may use the term—of the universe.

The sage, of course, is always free, and five minutes of true contemplation are worth more intrinsically—perhaps even historically—than the revolutionary splitting of the atom. We must not deduce from this, however, as did the pagans of old, that *homo faber* has no part in the destiny of *homo sapiens*, unless as a slave in the service of one of the sages. The grandeur of our era and its evangelical good fortune are due to the fact that the " industrialisation " of the world has provoked, even in the midst of a dramatic crisis of unity, a realisation of solidarity, in which poor and humble find freedom and fraternity through work and their common destiny. Salvation and history are one, a world history in which inner truths and social expression are no longer divided.

It now remains to trace, in the light of this philosophy, the unfolding of this history, in the interaction of nature and spirit, of technique and form, of systems and myths, in order to observe the laws of progress and to consider the problem of its purpose. For, if history follows a definite course and does not spend itself in endless revolutions, if, to use a Christian expression unintelligible to the wise men of antiquity, men are " travellers; " if time becomes evolution through eternity, it is because history has a purpose. This purpose will be achieved, in a final flowering, with the complete assumption of the universe by man, and a society of persons whose sovereign liberty derives from their communion in good in common possession: a supreme awakening of consciousness

whose beatitude will extend to the poorest, those who most ardently sought justice and equity.

As far as the laws of progress are concerned, I shall confine myself to one observation only. We have clearly seen from the foregoing analysis that the progress of humanity does not represent a direct and unbroken upward line in the series of civilisations. The uncertainty of matter and the exercise of individual and collective free-will give to history its dramatic character, in which man reveals both the heights and depths of his nature. Neither the evolutionary optimism of Marx, nor the aristocratic optimism of Condorcet, realises social evolution in the ever-increasing tempo of existence which is threatened at every moment by that uncertainty which veils even the most predictable destinies with mystery. It is from this perpetual struggle, in the midst of the most firmly fixed systems, that the awakening of consciousness, which liberates humanity, is born. It is in such moments that great men are the witnesses and creators of history.

I freely admit to an optimism which has sustained this enquiry from beginning to end and which, in our contemporary state of "cold war," may seem somewhat ingenuous. This optimism however is sanctioned by no less an authority than Cardinal Suhard, who in his famous pastoral diagnoses the present situation "not as the result of a catastrophe, but as the herald of a new birth." The existing malaise, he says, is not a product of the decadence of the world, nor even of a "disease"; it is a crisis of growth.[11]

[11] *Essor ou déclin de l'Église*. Paris, 1947, pp. 3-4, (E .tr., *The Church Today: Growth or Decline?*)

Here, without entering into a detailed analysis of the world situation, we come to the main characteristic. The crisis of growth thus diagnosed has come about because, owing to the pressure of economic determinisms and technical progress, we are faced at every stage of social life with an expansion of the communal idea. The realisation of this expansion, however painful, constitutes, as we now know, this "historic energy" which renews the world in the dramatic moments of humanity. The conquest of the hidden forces of matter emphasises the affinity between the transformation of the universe and the collective evolution of mankind. If this socialisation unfortunately lacks the "spiritual increment" which would turn it into a sphere of freedom, it is for us as Christians to undertake the task, since it is true that Christian life is an incarnation of the Holy Spirit, and not a retreat from history.

As far back as the second century, a Christian philosopher, St Irenaeus, gave us the formula for social evolution: "God created matter in time, in order that man, nurtured in matter, should crown it with immortality." For those who have this understanding of history, to live in the twentieth century is both a real victory and a real grace.

APPENDIX

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE ACCORDING TO ST MAXIMUS (668 A.D.)

If a philosophy—and a theology—of work should be based on a correct conception of the relationship between man and nature, we can turn for this to the early Christian philosophers who, according to their view of the world, situated man in the universe. They furnish us, not perhaps with a definite philosophical system, but with the principles and inspiration of a doctrine which is required today by our wider and more enlightened experience of man as a worker.

I have chosen from among many others a text by the great Eastern theologian St Maximus (668 A.D.), whose vision of the world was the ripe harvest of Greek philosophic, theological and mystical thought.

In contrast with the Fathers of the Latin church, and particularly St Augustine who emphasised the inwardness of man against the distractions of the outside world, the Greeks devoted a great deal of attention to the relationship between man and nature. Reviving one of the great anthropological themes of antiquity, they defined man as a "microcosm." Man epitomises in himself the elements and the values of the cosmos, statically, at the highest point of creation, and dynamically, owing to his physical and

moral duality in a hierarchic ascent towards the supreme Unity. If this physical system is seen as the realisation of God's design, it takes on a religious meaning which does not conflict with the internal laws of each of the natures, since these laws are the expression of the divine plan. If this system is also redeemed, after a preliminary failure, by Christ as God made man, the divine undertaking shows a human realism which is even more appreciable in a sacred doctrine. The truth of the full human nature of God incarnate (dogma of the two natures in Christ, Council of Chalcedon, 451 A.D.) defends the faith against the Monophysite mystique of the deification, which would nullify, together with the human nature of Christ, the fact of created nature (against Origenist tendencies).

The above very much condensed summary is taken from St Maximus[1]. This great Eastern theologian expounds in a most logical manner the themes developed by the Cappadocain Fathers of the fourth century, and in particular by Gregory Nazianzen (391 A.D.) and Gregory of Nyssa (396 A.D.). We may add that it was through his work that this theology was passed on to the Latin Church, unfortunately without much result.[2]

The text which we shall now quote suffers in being divorced from its doctrinal context. We shall, however, recall it briefly.

1 Maximus, imbued as were all the Greeks with neo-Platonic philosophy, bases his theology on unity, in the metaphysical and not in the numerical sense of the word. God is the Supreme Unity, he is one, and this is the best method by which we can describe him. He is unity in

[1] Extract from the brilliant exposé by H. Urs von Balthasar, *Liturgie cosmique, Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris, 1947.

[2] Situation in the twelfth century. Cf. the very interesting exposé by M.-Th. d'Alverny, "Le cosmos symbolique du XIIe siècle," in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, XX (1953), pp. 31-81, which shows that this view of the world was not only held by a few intellectuals, but was part of the contemporary imagery.

himself; he is, in all things, "the unifying force which is the organic nucleus."

2 Unification is consequently the fundamental law both of the perfection of beings in the likeness of God and of the government of God itself. This operation is, to use the term preferred by Maximus, a "synthesis" (translated in Latin by *conjunctio*, *copulatio*), of which the essential condition for the genesis of a real unity is the conservation of the parts and the elements and the respect for the integrity of the essence of each. This unification is accomplished by a dynamic process in the evolution of a world ascending towards unity.

3 The Christian system realises the unity of God and of the world by and in Christ. He parallels it in himself, and for this parallel to be true both the human nature of Christ and the substance of nature must be preserved. (Certain neo-Platonic Christians had over-emphasised a transcendental world of ideas.)

4 The unity of man, body and soul, in reciprocal immanence, is accomplished according to the laws of these two natures in the universe. Man is a being set in cosmic nature. More than this, as a "microcosm" this nature is innate in him.

5 The unity of the cosmos is consequently accomplished by and in man. In the likeness of, and according to the example of God the creator, man by his nature is the *fabricator* of the universe, re-unifying it in a new ascent towards that unity from which it was created.

Here we must consult our text in the Ambigua (explanation of difficult passages), a work in which Maximus comments on the texts of Gregory Nazianzen Book II, chap. 37 (*Patr. Graec.*, XCI, col. 1305).

The key-word in the interpretation of this text and that which defines the physical, metaphysical, moral and religious encounter of man and nature is the Greek word *ergasterion*. This word, derived from *ergon* meaning "work,"

is of great significance. It describes the action by which man confronts, takes hold of, transforms and conquers nature, "realising" it by a unification which to the Greeks was the final perfecting of an object.[3] The Latin translation, somewhat clumsy but equally significant, is *officina*. In French it is *atelier* or *usine*; in English "workshop" or "factory." Here the word loses something of its sense of personal action, the action of a "workman" in his work, as it were biologically.

Maximus teaches that the universe has a five-fold division. The first division is between non-created nature (God) and created nature, characterised by generation (in the Greek sense); this is the divine plan for the economy (*oikonomia*) inspired by the extension of his love. Next comes the division between the intelligible world and the tangible world (main Platonic thesis). Thirdly, in the tangible world, the division between earth and heaven. Fourthly, taking place on this earth and in earthly history, the transition from paradise to the present universe. Finally man, who, by his nature, is the continuing "maker" of this universe. Man is himself divided into male and female. (Several Greek theorists consider the distinction between, and the rôle of, the sexes as a physical and metaphysical symbol of the division of the universe in man himself.) Let us see how this regency of man over the cosmos in evolution—for we are dealing with stages of creation, and not with ideological contemplation—and over this humanisation of nature is defined.

Man is a living workshop which functions permanently and continuously. He himself is the unifying element of the most widely differing realities, in all their diversity, for good and in beauty, according to the origin of each entity. He himself is divided into male and female, but possesses, by his nature, a capacity for total synthesis.

[3] The content of the Latin *labor*, which is part of the concept of "work," is consequently quite irrevelant.

This unifying power, working in the causal evolution of these various entities, thus reveals the great mystery of the divine plan, since it harmonises the mutual cohesion of opposites, from the nearest to the furthest, from the smallest to the greatest, and so leads them back progressively to their unity in God.

In this design man, last of created beings, is a factor of physical unity, accomplishing a universal synthesis between all extremes by their own components.[4] *In so doing he returns them all to God as their first cause, assembling them primarily in a unity based on their autonomy and on their previous disparity, then leading them, in ordered progress, in an exalting and unifying ascent, which will end all differences, to God.*

Maximus then describes the stages of this unification, taking the five divisions enumerated above, beginning with that of the division of man himself into two sexes, as a physical image of the unifying love of God. In eternity it is the unity of the Creator and the created in a grace by which, without detriment to the irrevocable distinction between beings, everything will be made god-like, in supreme and final accomplishment.

Commentary

The basis of this view of the rôle of man and his relationship with nature is obviously the concept by which matter and spirit constitute a consubstantial union.[5] Any separation between the body and soul of man destroys or unbalances, to the extent of the separation (cf. the various Cartesian and other "spiritualisms"), this fundamental relationship between man and nature, which the Greeks called *techne*, because it imperils the very nature of the

[4] The word *synthesis* is not in the text. It is, however, a characteristic and high-sounding term of Maximus. Here, as elsewhere, he uses the synonyms *sundesmos*, *enotes*, *mesotes*, to describe the realisation of true unity in the conservation of the components. Note the emphasis which he gives to this regard for the component natures in the cosmic rôle of man.

[5] H. Urs von Balthasar, op. cit., pp. 121-126: "Esprit et matière."

"microcosm." Work is an intrinsic function of the incarnate spirit.

When Maximus speaks of man, he means the nature of man, and not individuals. He speaks as a Platonist, that is to say with a realism which gives this nature a substance radically surpassing the effects of a collective assembly of individual human beings. This realism is contestable, but at least it means that he is dealing with the determinisms of nature, transcending individual free-will.

Maximus's physics are dated. His sonorous neo-Platonic metaphysics are disputable. His theology involves religious and intellectual dilemmas which do not derive from the faith. The sententiousness of his words and concepts is that of a late Greek. Beneath all this however is his sublime demonstration of one of the essential elements in the "economy" of the Creator and Redeemer's plan: the universe as the sphere of man's activity and self-fulfilment.

Finally, whatever the relevance of his metaphysics and his theology, Maximus has excellently defined the profound connection between the relationship of man to nature and the relationship of man to God the creator, creator of man and nature. This relationship, as shown in the world and in history, in no way diminishes the former, but on the contrary confirms it, giving human work its full stature in man's realisation of his nature in the unity of the world and of history.

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